Q: I didn't know if you wanted to touch base at all on the significance of the decision to realign the PEO structure and what that would mean specifically for a center such as ESC.

A: Probably the most significant change that we made to our overall acquisition and sustainment community in the Air Force over the last ten years is the memo that the Chief and the Secretary signed out. I think it's actually called the Acquisition Organization, but we call it the PEO Restructure.

What's important about it is that when we created the SAF AQ PEO Program Manager chain and the Air Force Materiel Command itself, all about the same time, we started in motion, unwittingly, a process where the decisions with respect to the execution of the programs, the major programs I'm talking about, were being accomplished by a reporting chain that didn't have the authority to empower and direct the activities of the Air Force Materiel Command, and the Air Force Materiel Command that had the personnel, the infrastructure and the capabilities to assist the program managers were not involved in the progress and direction of the major programs.

This wasn't intentional and good people working towards the mission, and the mission is really successful program execution, can overcome that organizational barrier.

But for one reason or another, the system didn't always work as well together as you would hope. My personal view is that the organizational structure should be able to function irrespective of the personalities of people, so the PEO Restructure has now given one person the responsibility for not only reporting to Dr. Sambur on program management progress, but also the command authority to direct and enable the infrastructure to support program execution. That's a big deal. It's the very first and most important principle of war -- unity of command.

Q: Sure.

A: So now the troops below, whether they be working on acquisition programs directly or whether they be working as part of the infrastructure will have one boss who directs their efforts towards program execution in the name of Dr. Sambur, and when it comes to resource allocation, organize train and equip, in my name. So I'm very excited about this.

Q: Do we lose anything, sir? Profile in front of Congress of programs?

A: The one thing that you lose is -- The Washington leadership loses a little bit of their immediate face-to-face access with the Program Executive Officers. So we will have to make sure that the Capability Area Directors in Washington -- they used to be known as the Mission Area Directors (MADs). (I think they're called Capability Area Directors now.) We need to have the right resources to properly represent the status of the program face to face with our leadership and on the third floor with OSD's leadership and with the Joint Staff.

They already did that on the Hill; that was their job. But they weren't necessarily as immediately involved with some of the acquisition people on the third floor and on the Joint Staff as the PEO. So you lose a little bit of that. Other than that, I don't think you lose anything.

Q: So this puts the onus on them to do even more interface work with the senior leadership.

A: The Capability Area Directors, yes. They now become a more important voice to all Washington people interested in program status. They were very important in certain areas already but they now become important up there.

Q: Does it also mean that General Looney or General Johnson can spend more time down in D.C.?

A: Sure. I don't think there's any way out of that. They will probably spend more time in Washington, or more time on BTCs dealing with the Washington crowd. Yeah, they'll have to. Either they or their deputy for acquisition.

Remember, we not only have the PEO but he will have or she will have a deputy that will day-to-day ride herd on that program management structure while the PEO is handling not only some of the details that only a PEO is responsible to handle, they'll be providing that supervision day to day as well.

Q: Sir, I've had the opportunity two years running to hear you speak at the C4ISR Summit but not everybody here has, and certainly not everybody who will be reading these articles. I was wondering if you could touch just a little bit on what you see as some of the top C4ISR priorities, and what it really means to Air Force and joint operational success.

A: Sure. First of all, I think it's probably most important to realize that our weapons platforms and our munitions today have reached the stage where the most important and most significant enabling capability for our United States Air Force warfighting success is going to be determined by our ability to

properly receive information, exploit it, present it to our decisionmakers so they can make rapid decisions, and then give execution direction to our warfighting elements. That's the ESC job. That's what they do and it is the most important thing our Air Force is doing today.

Now there are some important weapons platforms that we're building. The F/A-22, the JSF, the tanker replacement, continued delivery of C-17, the MC-2A, enhancements to the AWACS, enhancements to JSTARS. All of those weapons platform capabilities are important, critical things, as are our space systems that we're developing. But if you take a look at them you'll find that the most important enabler of those weapon platforms is going to be the command and control backbone and infrastructure that they ride on and that they're connected to. That's what ESC does.

So the people up here should feel pretty good about the value, the importance of their work and the value of their efforts towards the next decade of our Air Force.

I think the Chief said it well. It's integration and that integration is part of our ESC mission.

In the first C4ISR Summit I talked about the importance of our predictive battlespace awareness which is really General Jumper's, one of his phrases. I talked about it, but at the very end of it the real question we asked of everyone is are you worthy of the charge we're given? Because we've got people over in harm's way every day. We've got soldiers and airmen that are dying in Iraq today. We've got to ask ourselves are we doing everything we can to make sure that they've got the absolute best information and the best weapon systems to know the battlespace, to protect themselves, and to be able to keep the enemy from accomplishing his objectives.

In this C4ISR Summit what I talked about was that the most significant things for us to be able to achieve, the kind of transformational goals that the SecDef and the President have set for us is our ability to have battlespace awareness at the touch of a screen. We have to present information in a way that decisionmakers can make decisions rapidly so that we can achieve desired effects near instantaneously. If we miss the SCUD because it moved away from where we last saw it or it fired before we shot it, all that effort could be for naught in an area where that weapon explodes or where weapons of mass destruction detonate.

So our job has got to be to find what's important, to make the decision about how to handle it, and to be able to employ the right system before it moves. That's what I'm here for. Those sensors and those networks and those datalinks and those decision support tools are all the kinds of things that happen here at the Electronic Systems Command. That's really important stuff and the

people are very important to our Air Force.

    Q: Last year you said you asked the question are we worthy.
This year you answered it in a sense in saying that you thought
in fact we were but that we had to continue to prove it every day.

    A: Yeah.

    Q: Are there some specific pointers we could offer people
as to how they do that? I know the short answer to that is do
your job the best you can every single day. But is there more to
it than that?

    A: Yeah. I just took a very interesting briefing on the
balanced scorecard. It's talking about what each of these
organizations believes is important for them to work on every day
to make sure that they're accomplishing the mission. Partnership,
mission execution, those sorts of things.

    So now what we do is we take a hard look at the milestone
charts that we've got or the delivery schedules or the progress
plans that we have -- whether it be an earned value management
system or whether it be a number of lines of code that were
supposed to have produced. And you asked yourself have you
achieved the goals that you and your organization established for
the development of this new capability.

    It doesn't matter whether you're somebody that's working
telemetry for some off-shore range activity. You ask yourself
well, how did I do in the weather prediction where all these
forces gathered up to do the job they're supposed to do but on
that particular mission they need clear weather and I said there
was going to be clear weather and there wasn't and we didn't get
the mission done. There's a weatherman's measure.

    They could have diverted all that workforce to other tasks
that could have been done that day, but instead they all got ready
for this mission and the weather report was inaccurate.

    What about the guy that didn't put the airspace reservation
in and all that effort, it was sent to airspace management, all
that effort went into a test that was supposed to occur in the
airspace but we didn't put the airspace reservation in and we
didn't get it.

    What about the guy that was supposed to make sure that we
completed three checks on that particular communication technique
or system in the test aircraft, and they were only able to get
through two of them because, for one reason or another they had
built a faulty plan or the guy dropped the box and it had to be
repaired. Those are the kinds of things that we hold ourselves
accountable to.

We have a schedule we're supposed to meet. We have tasks
that each of us perform to make that schedule, and when we don't
make the schedule, why? What went wrong?

If we can look ourselves in the mirror and say it was my
fault -- and by the way we should be totally honest with
ourselves. We should look at ourselves and say boy, that was my
fault. I can never let that happen again.

You can't necessarily make it up. You can just do better.
You can't make it up. So don't go shoot yourself, don't get
upset, don't beat yourself up and never be functional again. Say
okay -- It's like a golf shot. When you have one bad golf shot is
your whole game over? It can be, but these pros, somehow they
recover from that and oftentimes don't even lose a stroke.

What we've got to do is think of our mission that way. Okay,
I made a mistake here. I can't fix it, I can learn from it and I
can do better. So that's really what we're talking about with the
worthiness. Am I doing everything I can to make sure the program
stays on track to make sure that what I'm asked to do that the
team is counting on is being delivered properly so that they can
plan properly. If I make a mistake, why? What can I do to stop
it so that never happens again and then do better the next time.
That's what will happen.

We all make mistakes and we shouldn't beat ourselves up.
What we should do is move on with the learning behind us.

Q: Are there any things we need to do institutionally to
build that mindset into people so that they don't feel as though
if they make a mistake perhaps their career is over or.

A: Yeah, we have to do several things. Number one, it's a
function of not only leadership; it's a function of partnership.
We have to lead and inspire our people. They have to understand
they're important to the mission, each and every one of them, and
they have to understand that when they ask that question, am I
worthy, am I worthy of what I said I was going to do and am I
worthy of what the teams' expectations are? If not, then what can
I do? Go ask for help. Get some.

As a leader, look down. Look at the people that don't seem to
be performing as well as you think they should be. Are you
mentoring them, are you training them, are you taking the time to
bring them along? They're going to take over this Air Force, so
are they ready? Have we done everything we can to make them
ready?

So that's the first thing.

Second, we as team members, whether we're in leadership
positions or not, have to all look out for each other. We all

have to watch each other because there will be mistakes made and there will be people that will take it hard and what we have to do is we have to encourage one another and we have to support one another and we have to realize that we are all on the team together, we're partners in this endeavor, and that we should inspire and encourage each other every day. We cannot afford to lose our people, and this command loses way too many people.

My first month here I signed out 12 condolence letters. Many of them were health issues from someone in our work force. Maybe not in shape, maybe not feeling they're on part of the team, maybe going out and doing something that someone else could have helped them with. That's a partnership activity.

So leadership has to train, mentor, encourage, inspire. Partners have to do the same kinds of things. I think we need both of those.

Because when you ask that question are you worthy and you're honest, you can get down in the dumps and think like you're no good or you can say well no one's perfect. We'll just do better. By the way, I need a little help here. I need some help. So go to a partner. Go to your boss, go to a partner and say man, I'm not getting this. What can I do to do better because I'm letting the team down. That's not my culture. My culture is being on a winning team and that's what we do.

Q: OEF/OIF, sir? Are there specific lessons especially for the C4ISR community that you think we've learned that we already can be doing something about, we already should be applying?

A: You bet. We are making huge progress in our ability to establish an Air Operation Center. We're in what I consider to be the links, whether they be datalinks or communication nets into the Air Operation Center for the purpose of us being able to understand battlespace.

It's now time for us to get serious about what General Jumper has asked us to do and that's to understand, to push machine-to-machine interface. Right now many of the systems are in a stovepipe network and they come through their communication frequency in their wave form to a communication radio and get displayed by itself. So now I have 12 to 14 screens all displaying a different piece of that battlespace and not communicating with one another.

When one machine finds something of interest it needs to cue the other machine because its sensor technique can give you a three-dimensional look instead of a rough two-dimensional look. So basically what we have to do now is begin to integrate these sensor and communication systems and develop the right interfaces to where they will not only reflect common information in a higher competence level but they will also begin to discuss with one

another how to gather more data about an object of interest so that the decisionmaker can see the information quicker.

We've made great progress in bringing it all together into an AOC. We've made great progress in some connectivity between systems, but we have much more to do. That's where our most significant efforts are and that's what the Chief of Staff has asked us to work on very heavily at ESC, so we will.

Q: Were there any other major messages that you wanted to get across through this medium? I know you'll have some time tomorrow with the general workforce, but on workforce development or retention?

A: A couple of things. One, the people here are very important and they should know that. Second, they're not idols, they are part of a team. And third, we should do everything we can to develop them and inspire them. First develop them so that they can aspire to and have the skill sets they need to take on larger responsibilities. And inspire them to want more responsibility. Because it is their experience, their background, their expertise that ultimately will replace the more senior people, train those behind them, and direct the activities of those who are creating these very important warfighting capabilities that are making a difference around the world. There is no Air Force in the world even close. It's because of these people. It's because of the fact that they have some very important technical skills. We've got good leaders and good team builders. What we want to do is make sure that we develop them in a way that they will be able to assume those larger responsibilities and inspire them to want to do better for the purpose of taking us to the next level. That's very important.

Q: And you consider that to be more of an individual leadership thing than something we need to change institutionally?

A: It's both. There's leadership involvement, but there's also institutional things and that's one of the goals we're working on is beginning to develop the methodology by which we will be able to develop our people. Some will have better bosses than others, better mentors than others, but irrespective of whether you have the best boss or not, the system will be set up to try and help broaden and grow our people and any leaders who are better will just accelerate that process or make it even better.

Q: Thank you very much.

(END)